



AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (original) A method of characterizing relationships among members of a social network, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialogue between members of a social network;
 - determining a purpose for each of the messages;
 - determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue; and
 - characterizing the relationships among the members of the social network based on the pattern and purposes of the messages.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
 - selecting one of a plurality of purpose categories; and
 - embedding indicia of the selected purpose category in at least one of the plurality of messages.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of at least one of the plurality of messages by extracting the indicia therefrom.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a body section of each message.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a header section of each message.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the messages is an electronic mail message.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the purpose determined for each of the messages is selected from at least one of a note, an acknowledgement, a counter, a reverse counter, a complete, a commit, an acceptance, a decline, an offer, an invitation, a withdrawal, an opt-out, a request, and a question.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the pattern in the messages corresponds to one of a frequency of interaction, a latency in response, a latency in completion, a successful completion ratio, a nonresponsive ratio, an unsuccessful ratio, and a number of participating members until completion.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of analyzing the purpose for each of the messages to determine the pattern in the messages.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of classifying the purpose for each of the messages as one of a favorable, unfavorable, and neutral type.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of assigning a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialogue, the score assigned to each participating member being based at least in part on the purpose determined for each of the messages transmitted by that participating member.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

incrementing the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member; and

decrementing the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.

13. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

repeating each of the steps in claim 1 for a plurality of dialogues between the members of the social network; and

assigning a score to each of the members of the social network based on the purposes of the messages transmitted by each such member during the plurality of dialogues.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of using the scores and characterized relationships of the members to select members of a new social network.

15. (original) A system for characterizing relationships among members of a social network, the system comprising:

a message transmission-reception process receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialogue between members of a social network;

a primitive-detection process determining a purpose for each of the messages; a pattern-detection process determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue; and

a group-performance process characterizing the relationships among the members of the social network based on the pattern and purposes of the messages.

16. (original) The system of claim 15 further comprising a primitive/dialogue-selection process selecting one of a plurality of purpose categories and embedding indicia of the selected purpose category in at least one of the plurality of messages.

17. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the primitive-detection process determines the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a body section of each message.

18. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the primitive-detection process determines the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a header section of each message.

19. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein at least one of the messages is an electronic mail message.

20. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the purpose for each of the messages determined by the primitive-detection process corresponds to at least one of a note, an acknowledgement, a counter, a reverse counter, a complete, a commit, an acceptance, a decline, an offer, an invitation, a withdrawal, an opt-out, a request, and a question.

21. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern in the messages determined by the pattern-detection process corresponds to one of a frequency of interaction, a latency in response, a latency in completion, a successful completion ratio, a nonresponsive ratio, an unsuccessful ratio, and a number of participating members until completion.

22. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern-detection process analyzes the purpose of each of the messages to determine the pattern in the messages.

23. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern-detection process classifies the purpose of each of the messages as one of a favorable, unfavorable, and neutral type.

24. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the group-performance process assigns a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialogue, the score based at least in part on the purpose of each of the messages transmitted by that participating member.

25. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein the group-performance process increments the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable-type purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member; and

decrements the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.

26. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the group-performance process assigns a score to each of the members of the social network based on the purposes of the messages transmitted by each such member during a plurality of dialogues.

27. (original) The system of claim 26 wherein the scores and characterized relationships of the members are used to select members of a new social network.

28. (new) A method of characterizing relationships among members of a social network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialog between members of a social network;

determining a purpose for each of the messages;

determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue;

characterizing the relationships among the members of the social network based on the pattern and purposes of the messages;

assigning a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialog, the score assigned to each participating member being based at least in part on the purpose determined for each of the messages transmitted by that participating member;

incrementing the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member; and

decrementing the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.

29. (new) A system for characterizing relationships among members of a social network, the system comprising:

a message transmission-reception process receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialogue between members of a social network;

a primitive-detection process determining a purpose for each of the messages;

a pattern-detection process determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue; and

a group-performance process which:

characterizes the relationships among the members of the social network based on the pattern and purposes of the messages,

assigns a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialogue, the score based at least in part on the purpose of each of the messages transmitted by that participating member,

increments the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable-type purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member, and

decrements the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable purposes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.